NORWICH City Council

Norwich Highways Agency committee
22 March 2018

Local members' comments

Item 6 Transport for Norwich – Review of Essex Street Cycle

Representation from County Councillor Emma Corlett and City Councillor Karen Davis, local members for Town Close.

We were disappointed that some of the recommendations from the Sustrans report have not been incorporated in to the recommendations in the paper before committee and would like to raise the following points for consideration:

1. Essex Street is being used as a 'rat run' between Unthank Road and Chapelfield Roundabout to cut off queuing at the Unthank Road / convent road roundabout, and also to cut through around the park to Newmarket Road. We would like to see a weight restriction order of 7.5 tonnes imposed to reduce the number of large lorries using the cut through. The local businesses do not receive deliveries from the large vehicles that are using the route as a cut through. There is alternative access along Vauxhall Street anyhow.

2. Paragraphs 8 & 13 in report - it is extremely concerning that 351 drivers were going above 30mph and of those 40 were going above 50mph during the monitoring period. There is also an issue with drivers traveling the wrong way down this one way street, as highlighted in the Sustrans report in one week 22 drivers traveling the wrong way were doing so in excess of 30mph. Using the average speed as an assessment of risk in this situation masks the very serious problem of regular excessive speed, including against the one way system. To address this we support the introduction of two pinch points with tree planting to slow down traffic by losing one visitor parking space and splitting the space.

3. Paragraph 14 in report. When Tesco planning permission was forced through against the wishes of the council by the planning inspector, permission was granted without a customer car park, apart from a disabled parking space. In all the plans submitted by Tesco they stated their intention was that the area around the store was to be used for their delivery vehicles only. I note that a sign recently appeared in the "car park" saying who the car park is run by. There is not meant to be a car park. Surely this is an issue that could be addressed via the planning committee to hold Tesco to account for the terms of the planning permission. The reason lorries are parking on Essex Street is because of the failure to enforce the "non-car-park" meaning the area is full so lorries can't get in. I would have thought that should be absolutely something that the council can address, albeit via a different committee.

4. The full length of Essex Street should be block marked as a contraflow cycle lane 1.2m from the kerb edge, not just intermittently as it is now. There should be either share with care or give way to cyclists signs to make it clear cyclists as the more vulnerable road users has priority.

5. There should be two pinch points within the road to slow down traffic, as outlined in the Sustrans report. This could be accommodated by losing just one visitor parking space. To say similar restrictions were rejected by previous public consultation is not comparing like with like, as previous proposals that went out to public consultation would have seen a reduction in a significantly greater number of parking spaces.

6. Consideration should be given to a raised table or at the very least vivid road markings at the entrance to Essex Street to make it clear it is a shared space with cycles, and what the speed limit is.

7. We support 20mph signage and road markings at intervals along the street.

8. We support the addition of an island at the top of Essex Street to better demarcate the start of the cycle lane. We support the change in priority and that vehicles must give way to traffic exiting from Suffolk Square, however the design of the junction, road markings and signage will need to make this very clear and physically more likely otherwise it will just increase the risk of drivers or cyclists exiting Essex Street not giving way, and vehicles or cyclists leaving Suffolk Square at risk of being hit.

9. We have considered the suggestion made by some residents to re-route the cycle route along Rupert Street and down Trinity Street and we do not believe the evidence supports such a change, and agree that this would increase risk to cyclists as they would have to turn right across traffic on to Unthank Road, so do not support this as an alternative.

10. The main problem is the behaviour of some drivers. What can be done to encourage the police to do targeted enforcement of both excessive speed and driving the wrong way down Essex Street? Can the committee write to the local police team to alert them to the monitoring findings of excessive speeds including whilst traveling the wrong way down Essex Street?